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Security Council

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Provisional

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Tuesday, 27 March 2001, 11 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Yel'chenko	(Ukraine)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Ireland	Mr. Cooney
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Mauritius	Mr. Neewoor
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

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01-30793 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Israel, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lancry (Israel) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 27 March 2001 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2001/282, and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held today, Tuesday, 27 March 2001, regarding the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the current debate in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2001/270, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Bangladesh, Colombia, Jamaica, Mali, Mauritius, Singapore and Tunisia. I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to photocopies of letters dated 26 and 27 March 2001 from Israel addressed to the Secretary-General, which will be issued as documents of the Security Council under the symbols S/2001/278 and S/2001/280, respectively.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

Before giving the floor to members of the Council wishing to make statements before the voting, I should like to state the following in my capacity as the representative of Ukraine.

From the very beginning of the outbreak of the current crisis in the Middle East, Ukraine has been among the delegations that stood for appropriate and effective actions by the United Nations Security Council with a view to putting an end to the increasing Israeli-Palestinian confrontation. Proceeding from that, my delegation has been consistently in favour of the idea of establishing a United Nations observer presence in the Palestinian territory to protect Palestinian civilians. While being supportive of that idea, we have always recognized that its practical implementation is impossible without the cooperation of Israel.

Our position on this matter was clearly manifested during the voting on a draft resolution that took place on 18 December 2000, and was reconfirmed at the recent emergency meeting held by the Council at the request of the Arab Group and Palestine. This position has not changed since then. However, my delegation is worried about the current stage of the Council's consideration of this issue, and about the likely outcome of the action. The different approaches of the members of the Council to this sensitive issue are well known but, in our view, they are not insurmountable.

We commend the enormous efforts exerted by all members of the Council — in particular by the members of the non-aligned caucus, the four Western European members and the United States delegation, as

well as the delegations of Palestine and the Arab troika — to find common ground for the agreed text of the draft resolution. As the delegation holding the presidency of the Council, we did our utmost to contribute to reaching that goal.

As the current President and as a member of the Council, my delegation bears its share of responsibility for this unfortunate situation. Without the necessary unanimity of the members of the Council, we do not believe that today's vote on the draft resolution before us will either achieve its original goal as regards the protection of Palestinian civilians or send any positive signal to the peoples in the region.

Therefore, while supporting the contents of the draft resolution and being well aware of the outcome of this voting exercise we are about to embark upon, my delegation will not take part in today's vote. We hope that there is still a chance to reach consensus on the draft resolution contained in document S/2001/281, which we hope will ultimately have the support of the members of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and for deciding to organize it in order to take action on the proposal submitted by the non-aligned caucus of the Security Council. It is my distinct honour to submit the draft resolution on this subject contained in document S/2001/270 on behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus — Colombia, Jamaica, Mali, Mauritius, Singapore and Tunisia — and on behalf of my own delegation, Bangladesh.

The subject being taken up for action today has been before us for quite some time. Members of the Council will recall that on 7 October 2000 we in the Council adopted resolution 1322 (2000), which called for the cessation of violence and condemned the excessive use of force against Palestinian civilians. From then on, this issue has been of primary importance to the Non-Aligned Movement and the Arab Group, and in the minds of the general membership of the United Nations.

In December, the non-aligned caucus made a proposal to send a United Nations observer force to the region so that the ongoing violence there, which still continues, could be contained. That force was meant to ensure the safety and security of Palestinian civilians. It was, however, not possible for the Council to adopt that proposal or a draft resolution to that effect. Subsequently, the Arab League and the Non-Aligned Movement made a request to hold an urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider establishing a United Nations force for the protection of Palestinian civilians, which was in line with what the Non-Aligned Movement caucus had proposed earlier, in December.

After the open debate held by the Council, in which not only the members of the Security Council but also a large number of the Members of the United Nations not members of the Council participated, and at which the issue of establishing a United Nations observer force for the protection of Palestinian civilians emerged as the single most important point made by delegations in their statements, the non-aligned caucus of the Security Council decided to revive its own draft resolution and submitted, on 20 March, a text containing appropriate adjustments for the establishment of a United Nations observer force for the protection of Palestinian civilians. That proposal was ultimately "put in blue" and was made available to the members of the Council on 23 March.

We in the Non-Aligned Movement caucus have been anxious to work on that text with the support of the other members of the Council. In that context, we received with an open mind a draft resolution submitted by the four European countries members of the Council. That text attempted to broaden the scope for support of the idea of a protection force for Palestinian civilians. As I said, with an open mind and in good faith, the Non-Aligned Movement caucus engaged in the negotiations on the European text, providing our own ideas and suggestions. Our objective was to prepare and articulate a draft that would have the broadest possible support of the Council. We believed that if an observer force were to be established, it had to have the broadest support of the Council. During that exercise we also had in mind the Arab Summit scheduled to take place in Amman on 27 and 28 March. We emphasized time and again that it was necessary for the Security Council to act on the proposal for an observer force before the commencement of the Summit.

This subject — the protection of Palestinian civilians — is one of the items on the agenda of the Arab summit; the Arab leaders were looking forward to

our action. The draft resolution had contained a mandate for the Secretary-General to undertake consultations with the parties on the issues appearing in the draft resolution, and we had thought that while he was in Amman to attend the Arab summit it would be appropriate for him to receive the Council's mandate to start his consultations with the parties concerned. That is why the timeframe of the Arab summit for action on the draft text was absolutely essential. Time and again the Non-Aligned Movement had made that point very clear to our colleagues with whom we were engaged in negotiations on a draft text.

Intensive negotiations had been taking place for the past five days. The non-aligned caucus and our European colleagues, subsequently joined by the United States, had engaged in long hours of consultations and negotiations on the text. And, to show our good faith, we set aside our own text, and worked on the European text, hoping that broad-based positive support for that agreed text would be possible. That was one of the main objectives of our work. We thought this exercise would articulate broad support in the Council for the role of the United Nations, and that of the Secretary-General, on the Middle East question and on the question of Palestine. We thought it would also send an appropriate message from the Council to the Arab summit so that the Arab leaders who are directly involved in the issues could be engaged in the matter. Also, of course, our objective was to take action on the draft resolution by Sunday so that the Arab summit, which started today, could benefit from the action of the Council.

The Non-Aligned Movement caucus was hopeful from the beginning that it would be possible to work out a text which would command the broad support of the Council. Such a text was drawn up this afternoon, and the Non-Aligned Movement caucus was ready for action. We thought the text which had emerged after all those hours of negotiations had the possibility of broad-based support. We worked until five o'clock this morning, and we have been working since then. When the text, which had seemed to have such a broad base of support, was ready, we were hopeful that action would be taken this evening, so that, even if the summit had started in Amman, the leaders would benefit from the text for the final day of the summit, tomorrow. Late in the evening, we were advised that it was not possible for us to agree on action on the text which we had worked out. In that situation, in order to be able to take a Council decision in time for the conclusion of the Arab summit, the Non-Aligned Movement caucus requested of the presidency of the Council that a vote be taken on the draft resolution originally proposed by the non-aligned caucus. That is the draft resolution which I referred to, and which is contained in document S/2001/270.

Members of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus fully cooperated with other members of the Council to reach agreement on the text, which was negotiated over long hours. We had approached those negotiations in good faith and in total transparency. We had shown flexibility time and again to accommodate the views of all sides, the basic intention being that this observer force proposal would have the broadest possible support in the Council.

So we come to the Council requesting action on our text, feeling frustrated that it was not possible for us to take action on the broad-based draft resolution which was negotiated and which emerged this evening.

We hope that the proposal contained in our text, for the establishment of a mechanism for the protection of Palestinian civilians, will receive the broadest support from the Council, and we hope that the Council will be able to act in such a manner that the safety, security and protection of the Palestinian civilians are ensured.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): To date, this new round of violent conflict between Palestine and Israel has lasted for more than half a year. It has caused casualties among civilians, especially among a large number of Palestinian civilians. It has complicated the Palestinian question. It poses a direct threat to the Middle East peace process. If this violent confrontation is not checked in time, it will surely exacerbate the hatred and animosity between Palestine and Israel and will cause and perpetuate more serious confrontation and conflict. That would be most inauspicious for the security of Palestine, Israel and the region as a whole.

As soon as possible, Palestine and Israel should put an end to violent conflict and resume peace talks, so that the Middle East peace process can return to its proper course.

As the principal organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council can and should continue to play an

important role in resolving the question of Palestine, in promoting the Middle East peace process and in safeguarding the peace and security of that region. That is in the interest of both Palestine and Israel, and it is also the wish of the vast majority of States Members of the United Nations.

We are of the view that sending a needed international presence to the region would help both sides to put an end to violence, to establish mutual trust and to ensure the safety of civilians on both sides. It would also help create favourable conditions for the two sides to resume peace talks.

The draft resolution submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement caucus reflects the concern of the international community with respect to the question of Palestine. Demands and proposals set out in the draft resolution are reasonable and constructive. We therefore support the draft resolution proposed by the Non-Aligned Movement. The Chinese delegation encourages the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to continue his contacts with Palestine and with Israel and to seek solutions that will be acceptable to both sides.

We appeal to the parties concerned to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions on the question of the Middle East — in particular resolution 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), adopted unanimously by the Security Council — as well as the principle of land for peace, which has been accepted by the international community, in order to move forward towards a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of the Middle East.

The President: I now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2001/270.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bangladesh, China, Colombia, Jamaica, Mali, Mauritius, Russian Federation, Singapore, Tunisia.

Against:

United States of America.

Abstaining:

France, Ireland, Norway, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows: 9 votes in favour, 1 against and 4 abstentions. One Council member did not participate in the voting. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): The United States cast this vote with great regret. It should not have been necessary, and this draft should not have been put to the vote. We wanted to support an action in the Council that advanced the cause of peace. For us, this is a matter of deeply held principle. But sadly, that is not what was offered.

We would ask, why was the decision to force a vote taken now, when it was clear to all that our deliberations had yet to produce a consensus, a consensus that we collectively, as members of the Council, repeatedly supported over the past week. The cause of peace would have been better served by additional deliberations, no matter how difficult or protracted.

The Secretary-General is in Amman to attend the Arab summit and to continue his mission of good offices in a troubled region. We support him, but this draft resolution sought to prescribe to the Secretary-General, and through him to the parties themselves, the way forward in the search for peace in the Middle East. The draft has, in doing so, demonstrated an unrealistic approach to this complex conflict by ignoring the most basic precept of peacemaking: the need to encourage the parties to find and implement their own lasting solutions and then to stand ready to help in their implementation. Sadly, the opportunity to play such a constructive and encouraging role was missed today.

The United States opposed this draft resolution because it is unbalanced and unworkable and hence unwise. It is more responsive to political theatre than political reality. In this draft resolution, some pretended that the Council could impose a solution, including a protection mechanism for civilians, in the absence of an agreement between the parties. Instead, the Security Council, acting on behalf of the international community, should have called on the parties to end all violence, to protect civilians and to resume negotiations, so that all civilians on both sides would be safe. The United States wanted, and would have supported, a draft resolution making such a call.

The Council could have, and should have, called on both parties to take the steps necessary to restore confidence, such as ending incitement and violence and resuming contacts at all levels to implement their reciprocal commitments, including the understandings reached at the summit at Sharm el-Sheikh. The United States wanted, and would have supported, a draft resolution making such a call.

Regrettably, the Palestinian Authority has never fulfilled its commitment, made at Sharm el-Sheikh, to speak out unequivocally, in Arabic, against violence.

Most important, the Council should have expressed its readiness to assist the parties in the implementation of any agreements they reach. The United States would have supported, and indeed promoted, such a call.

Last December, a similar draft resolution failed to receive the nine affirmative votes required for adoption, sending a message that the road to the just and lasting peace we all seek in the Middle East does not begin in this Council. That road begins in the region, and the parties themselves must make the difficult choices required. The Council can and should support them in that effort.

The seven Council members that abstained last December, including the United States, were able to defer a premature and impractical call to establish a United Nations observer force. By acting together, however, we were able to preserve the concept of an international presence for reconsideration at a future time.

We acted out of similar motives tonight. We support much of the substance we have been discussing in the past week, but, as we repeatedly made clear to other Council members, we cannot allow the Council to adopt a draft resolution that simultaneously risks damage both to the prospects for peace and to the Council's own credibility. Casting this vote gives us no pleasure at all. However, abstaining and allowing the Council to adopt such an ill-conceived and unworkable draft resolution would have been irresponsible.

Frankly, we are troubled that other members, which we know recognized the glaring weaknesses and clear danger of this draft resolution, did not join us in opposing it. The Council was engaged in very serious, at times intense deliberations, seeking a way forward that recognized the legitimate roles and responsibilities of both the Council and the parties. We worked hard for consensus and a common approach. That process was cut short by this vote, for reasons that have nothing whatever to do with the search for peace.

Now that this draft resolution is behind us, we should turn our attention to ways in which the Council can genuinely support and encourage the search for peace. We ask other members to join us and continue our discussions in that very difficult but necessary effort. This should begin today. The blessings of peace have been denied to the people of the Middle East for far too long.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): For several very long days, the 15 members of the Security Council have worked in a particularly constructive spirit on the most difficult issue on its agenda: the conflict in the Middle East. They have done so by maintaining a positive and constant contact with the parties concerned.

All of the members of our Council share two convictions. Because today there is no mediation, because peace negotiations are at a standstill and because the cycle of violence is increasingly spiralling out of control, the United Nations must act. It is doing so through the actions of its Secretary-General, who is currently taking part in the Amman summit. However, Mr. Kofi Annan cannot act under optimal conditions unless he receives a very clear mandate from the Council.

Our second conviction is that the Security Council cannot, on an issue as difficult as this one, make its voice heard and assist the Secretary-General in influencing the course of events unless it is united. It is in this spirit that the four European members of the Council worked with all of their partners. The result is here tonight, in the shape of a draft resolution which we are submitting officially. This draft is substantial and balanced. If it were to be adopted, it would give Kofi Annan and the parties to the conflict a clear perspective of the path to be followed in order to put an end to the violence and to end all of the measures that are keeping the Palestinian people under unbearable constraints, with a view to the resumption of the peace negotiations.

Despite almost unanimous support, our draft resolution does not yet have all the backing necessary for effective action on the part of the Council. That is why we decided not to submit it to a vote, and to

continue to try to muster the support that we are lacking this evening. With respect to the text presented by our partners from the non-aligned countries, the four European members decided to abstain, despite the great merits of the draft. We abstained primarily because of the alternative approach that we chose together. This evening's vote does not in any way change France's policy in the Middle East — its commitment to all those who are suffering today and who want to build their nation and their State in peace.

In conclusion, I would like once again to pay tribute to all of our partners and to the representatives of the parties to the conflict, as well as to those of the Arab countries. Over the past few days, we have done a remarkable job together. Let us continue together, so that the United Nations can play its full role in the service of a just peace.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): Together with our European partners on the Council, the United Kingdom put forward a number of ideas and proposals over the past week in a serious attempt to find a consensus in the Council on this most difficult of issues. We did so because we believed that the Council, putting its collective spirit first, could have a positive influence on the peace process, on both the parties and, therefore, on the promotion of peace and security in the region, which desperately needs and deserves it. We are very grateful to our Council and other colleagues who worked with us so patiently and imaginatively in the same spirit. We had not abandoned hope that the textual proposals we sponsored could have produced the right result with further work. We therefore regret that the draft resolution that we have just considered should have been put to the vote now, especially in the knowledge that one permanent member could not concur. The deadline imposed on us, while understandable in the short term, carries less validity when considered in a broader perspective.

We believe that the failure of the Council's efforts in this way cannot contribute to the most important objective: the lessening of tension in the Middle East and assistance to the parties in ending the violence, securing a normal life for the civilian population — particularly in the occupied territories — and the resumption of negotiations. We disagreed with the act of seeking a vote this evening and, with our European partners, therefore abstained. We remain ready to work for the realization of the ideas expressed in the failed draft resolution, not least progress towards the setting up of a protection or observer mechanism, with the agreement of the parties to cooperate with it. We condemn the continuing violence and incitement, and the excessive use of force in reacting to unrest. We hope that the concept of observers will not now be lost, and we have work in hand to pursue it when the circumstances are right.

Our work on this subject will continue, and United Kingdom policy remains unchanged. We strongly support the part played already by the Secretary-General, and expect that he will remain engaged in an important role. The Council's experience of working together on this issue — although unsuccessful so far — should not be disregarded; we were very close to something effective and valuable.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation has noted with some regret that the situation in the territory of Palestine is gradually deteriorating. The conflict is growing, and every day the cost in human lives increases. The negotiating process has been deadlocked; the parties are unable to resume their contacts, which are particularly necessary today in the area of security in order to overcome the violence and resume the peace process. The situation has further deteriorated as a result of the isolation of the West Bank and Gaza and the virtual economic blockade of that territory.

We note that very serious efforts have been made in the Security Council in recent days to elaborate an agreed response to the situation in the occupied territories. On many important aspects of the draft resolution under discussion, members of the Security Council were very close to agreement, and it appeared that the achievement of consensus was possible. Unfortunately, however, we cannot fail to draw the conclusion that it was impossible to arrive at a text that was acceptable to all. At the same time, we are convinced that at this critical period the Security Council is not entitled to remain on the sidelines and to divorce itself from the tragic events in the West Bank and Gaza. We believe that it is now necessary to focus on finding a way to resolve the situation through the combined efforts of all the parties concerned. For that reason, we voted in favour of the draft resolution that was presented by the Non-Aligned Movement caucus.

We believe that it is important to put an end to the violence — that is the why we voted in favour — as well as to normalize the situation around the

Palestinian territories and to remove the blockades, including the economic one. At the same time, it is important to ensure that the negotiation process is resumed in a context in which the legitimate interests of the parties can be satisfied. We believe that the draft resolution of the Non-Aligned Movement would not have imposed precepts on either the Palestinians or the Israelis, but would have instructed the Secretary-General to establish contacts with the parties for the purpose of producing a mutually acceptable formula for creating a mechanism to protect the civilian population.

On a broader scale, the Russian Federation will continue to make every possible effort to reach a speedy resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of the agreements between the parties directly involved in the conflict, and to facilitate the optimum format for international assistance for such negotiations.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): the situation in the Middle East is tense and gives us reason to fear a further deterioration. At this critical time it is important that the international community, and the Security Council in particular, behave with caution and in a constructive manner.

Norway therefore felt it to be of crucial importance for a unified Security Council to make a statement with a call for an end to violence, for a return to normal economic activity and daily life, for a resumption of peace talks with the aim of reaching a final agreement and to provide strong support for the role of the Secretary-General in the quest for peace. It was this need for the Council to speak with one voice that made Norway engage with our European colleagues in a serious effort that we hoped would receive the support of the full Council.

The situation in the Middle East is an issue of the utmost importance to Norway, and we were therefore particularly glad to see that the caucus of the Non-Aligned Movement and other members of the Council were willing to participate in a serious discussion with us. We appreciate the commitment made by everyone to strive for a result that could find the support of all members.

The result of these negotiations up to this point is not what we had hoped for. Our wish was to give the Secretary-General a strong mandate for his further efforts, both for his discussions at the Summit in Amman and for the difficult times in the coming weeks and months, and to give the Security Council an important and active role in this issue, which has been with us since the early days of this Organization.

We were not able to have such unity in the Council at this time. Norway regrets this, and I am convinced that all members of the Council share our feelings. Norway abstained tonight because we do not believe this resolution would be helpful to the efforts to get the peace process back on track at this time. The Security Council must not be a forum only for an exchange of views, but a constructive actor for peace and security.

We did not manage to reach our common goal on making a statement by a unified Council on this important issue at this time. However, we must not give up hope for reaching such a result at a later stage. I would appeal to all members of the Council to not let our lack of common approach today make us give up on this noble goal. I would urge all members to keep alive the spirit of cooperation demonstrated during our many hours of negotiations and to return to this issue when we all feel that our efforts can have a positive impact on the situation in the Middle East.

Mr. Cooney (Ireland): Ireland is deeply concerned at the apparently worsening conflict in the occupied Palestinian territories and the resultant loss of life, including the deaths of innocent children.

We have been working over the past week with other members of the Council, in particular our fellow Europeans, members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the United States, to prepare a draft resolution that could be adopted by the Council. This draft resolution would invite the Secretary-General to consult with the parties on taking early steps in a number of areas, including an ending of violence, the resumption of negotiations and the implementation of the understandings reached at Sharm el-Sheikh in October 2000, as well as a range of confidence-building measures.

We have also been seeking to provide Council endorsement for the setting up, with the accord of the responsible authorities, of a mechanism for the protection of Palestinian citizens, a matter of particular concern. We have made significant progress, and the draft resolution has been submitted in the name of France, Ireland, Norway, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. We intend to continue consultations on this

draft with the remaining members of the Council and other interested parties with a view to securing its early adoption, if possible by consensus.

My delegation abstained in the voting on the draft resolution before us tonight for two important reasons. First, we have consistently stated that for the United Nations to dispatch an observer force or an observer mission, the agreement of the parties is necessary. I know that this is not a view shared by all at this table, but it is necessary for the essential guarantee of safety and cooperation, without which no Member State could be expected to provide the required personnel.

But there is a further and ultimately more important consideration. The Middle East peace process at the current critical juncture needs the full support of the international community. The Security Council has an overriding responsibility to channel this support and in particular to give the Secretary-General a strong mandate to engage the parties on the way forward. The alternative draft resolution sponsored by four European members of the Council and Ukraine could provide a broader base of support for such progress. We hope that work can continue on this draft text. The sponsors would be very happy to accept amendments that would help secure its passage.

Ireland intends to continue to use its position as a member of the Security Council to work constructively with fellow members to contribute to real progress in the Middle East and to ending the long suffering of the people of that region.

The President: I call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to address the Council.

The draft resolution just voted on and not adopted reflects, unfortunately, a one-sided view of the nature of the last six months of violence. The reality, as the last 24 hours have gruesomely reminded us, is that the double-edged sword of this conflict cuts both ways. In Hebron yesterday a 10-month-old baby girl, Shalhevet Pass, was shot and killed by a Palestinian sniper armed with a telescopic rifle, which, I hasten to add, is a weapon generally available only to official Palestinian security personnel. Today the city of Jerusalem fell under the dark cloud of terrorism. Two separate terrorist bombings, one of them on a public city bus, killed at least one person and wounded nearly 40 others.

These tragic incidents perpetrated by those with no regard for the noble principles we seek to uphold in this Council must not go unmentioned. We do a great disservice to the mandate of this Organization, as well as to the memory of the innocent civilians whose lives were taken by the enemies of peace, by failing to loudly condemn such atrocities.

We are therefore disheartened that this draft resolution employs terms that reflect a purely Palestinian viewpoint. There is no mention of Israeli casualties — of the 70 Israelis who have been killed by terrorists since September. There is no clear call upon the Palestinian side to refrain from unilateral actions. There is no condemnation of Palestinian terrorism, or specifically of Chairman Yasser Arafat's departure from his signed commitments to renounce violence and terrorism as a tool to achieve political objectives.

To our dismay, it appears that there is nothing the Palestinians have done in six months of murder, abduction, bombing and mortar attacks, let alone in the last 24 hours, that is worthy of reproach. Is it possible that, after all the debate in the Council and after three separate terrorist attacks in a single day, Israel must continue to shoulder all the blame and all the responsibility?

As we have stated before, Israel remains opposed to the establishment of a United Nations force in the region. Chairman Arafat has the ability to protect the lives of his people himself. I wish to emphasize yet again that the moment Chairman Arafat issues a public call to end the terrorist campaign, once he returns in earnest to the negotiating table, and when both in word and in deed he acts to reinvigorate the spirit of peace, Israel will take whatever steps possible in order to accelerate the return to normal relations between us and the Palestinians. Indeed, we have already taken steps to that end, as the situation allows. More comprehensive measures could be implemented once the Palestinians demonstrate a firm commitment to control the situation.

More importantly, the current Palestinian initiative represents a blatant attempt to obscure their strategic choice to engage in violence and terrorism. Thus, the Security Council must not endorse such a choice by coming to the aid of those who initiate hostile confrontations. Moreover, such a step, while the

intifada continues, has the potential to actually escalate the violence and further destabilize the region by solidifying the Palestinian refusal to put down their weapons and compromise for peace. If the international community wishes to see a return to dialogue and negotiation and the ultimate realization of the legitimate aspirations and needs of both parties through a peaceful process, it must insist that the Palestinians stop the violence that they have initiated and refrain from actions that may be construed as endorsing the violence. We therefore take positive note of the fact that the Council has not taken such an action.

We look forward to a time when we can return to the process of negotiations with the Palestinians as partners and not as adversaries, to a time when dialogue has once again replaced weapons as a means of addressing the outstanding issues in this conflict. For in this way, and only in this way, will we arrive at a just and lasting solution to the conflict that will spare future generations the pain and misery we have both experienced over the past six months.

The President: I call on the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council arrived at a negative result today because one of its permanent members used the right of the veto. This means that the Council was prevented from carrying out its duties to preserve international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. This is truly regrettable.

As far as we, the Palestinian people, are concerned, we believe that this failure also means a failure to contribute to ending the tragedy that has been taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories because of the bloody and oppressive campaign waged against our people by Israel — the occupying Power — and by the leaders in charge and the current and previous Israeli Prime Ministers — Messrs. Sharon and Barak — through all their declared and expressed statements and positions that run counter to international law and that call for escalation and confrontation. This also means a failure to provide the support necessary to revive what is left of the Middle East peace process, as well as the necessary assistance to the parties to overcome the difficulties they face by simply assuming the presence of good intentions among the parties. This regrettable result came about despite the constant work done recently to which we all contributed.

I would first like to express, on behalf of the Palestinian people, our heartfelt thanks to the Non-Aligned caucus in the Security Council, which sponsored today's draft resolution — Bangladesh, Colombia, Jamaica, Mali, Mauritius and Singapore. Those friendly States undertook this marvellous action in support of the just demands of the Palestinians and in support of the peace process in the Middle East on the basis of the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement and on the basis of positions of principle regarding the question of Palestine. Likewise, we would like to thank the members of the Council who voted in favour of the draft resolution and those that expressed their readiness to support us even if the current circumstances were more difficult. In that regard, I would like to mention China and the Russian Federation. We would also like to express our deep gratitude to our brothers in the Arab Group and the Group's Chairman this month — the United Arab Emirates — as well as to Chairman of the Arab Summit, the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Since November 2000 we have made efforts to establish a United Nations observer force to provide protection to the Palestinian people.

As members know, the result was the unfortunate outcome which the Council reached for reasons known to all. Subsequently, we resumed our efforts towards the same objective. Later, when it had become clear that it would be impossible to attain our objective now, owing to the negative United States position, European members of the Council took an initiative that would have responded to the situation on the ground and to the situation relating to the Middle East peace process, with a view to moving the peace process forward. There was a move to accept a limited step in the direction of the possibility of setting up a force to help protect Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territories; this came to be known as the two-stage approach.

To be frank, we were not very happy, because, as is only normal, we feel that protection for our Palestinian people should be expedited in order to put an end to the current bloodshed. But, in the hope that we could take a positive step that might open the way to better prospects for greater Security Council participation in the Middle East situation and that

might improve the situation on the ground and promote the peace process, we agreed to respond to that initiative; we cooperated sincerely with European countries and with the United States of America — and, naturally, with non-aligned and other members of the Security Council. More than once during that time, we thought we were close to agreement. Indeed, on Tuesday afternoon we achieved an agreement conditional only upon acceptance by our officials.

Despite all of that, it became clear to us late this evening that everything related to timing had evaporated. There seems to have been an attempt to delay action without setting any definite date or time. And as for content, it was suggested that what had been decided was in fact very far removed from what could actually be agreed upon at this time. For our part, in the light of our duty towards our people, it would have been impossible for us to pursue action that would result in something falling far short of what is acceptable in the light of the situation on the ground, in the light of past Security Council resolutions, and in the light of the provisions of international law and international humanitarian law. Moreover, it would be unreasonable for us to pursue action that seems to drag on indefinitely in the face of a situation that is daily deteriorating and given the need for an international response to the issue of timing.

To all of that we must add the convening of the Arab summit at Amman, an important political development that cannot be ignored. We wanted the Council's action to send the right message to that summit, one that would promote interdependence and harmony between Arab action and international legitimacy in addressing the deteriorating situation in the region.

We made every possible effort to reach such a positive conclusion, even at the expense of the substance of the draft resolution — even, more than once, at the expense of our own positions. Clearly, we are sorely disappointed at the position we are in today, including all the surprises and unexpected developments, some of which were rather unusual in terms of the Council's procedures and working methods. It was out of the question to take a step backward by sacrificing the legitimate needs and demands of our people, including their need for international protection, especially since no other concrete proposal was put forward in terms of either timing or substance.

From our perspective, this stage of our effort with the Security Council has come to an end. We shall certainly return at a later date to see what can be done, in cooperation with Council members who are willing, in the service of the principles of peace, justice and legitimacy. We are confident that this will ultimately be possible; under no circumstances will we cease to call upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. At the same time, we shall continue to welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan; we call upon him to continue those efforts, especially as the Council has been prevented from doing its duty.

When we think of what has happened, we truly think it strange: After hearing just a while ago the unbalanced — at least from our point of view — statement by the representative of the United States of America, we have to admit that our astonishment is no longer. Indeed, we would have liked not to be surprised any longer, but for totally different reasons and in a totally different way.

The Palestinian party will work sincerely to resume traditional cooperation here at the United Nations and in capitals with the friends who chose to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution today. We are confident that this is possible, particularly in the light of the traditional Middle East policies of those States.

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute once again and express our thanks to all of those who stood by our side. I am especially thankful to the non-aligned caucus — primarily its coordinator for this month and the Arab member, Tunisia — for their positions of principle in support of our people's struggle.

The President: There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.15 a.m.